

RE: Inquiry: The Perceptions and Status of Vocational Education and Training.

Dear House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a response to this inquiry.

I am the Director of a private Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and have since 2007 dedicated my career to teaching and learning within the private Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector.

For context:

- Independent RTOs provide the majority of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Australia. ¹
- According to the ITECA 2022 State of the Sector Review, independent Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) are the primary providers of quality skills training and support 87.1% of all students in skills training. ²

I respond specifically to the following term of reference:

perceptions and status of the VET sector and how this may be impacting student enrolment choices, employer engagement, and recruitment and retention of the VET educator workforce, and how perceptions and status of the VET sector can be improved.

One of the most important features of the independent and private provider is their ability to adapt rapidly to changing industry needs. Nimbleness and agility are common features of private providers because they are not subject to the slow-moving bureaucratic processes involved in getting things done which is, in my experience, common in public providers.

Further, many smaller independent providers play a crucial role in addressing local skills needs. Tailored programs and close partnerships with local industry in private providers result in better student outcomes.

Innovation is important in the fast-paced and constantly evolving job market and well funded private providers are capable innovators.

The perceptions and status of the VET sector can be improved by supporting private providers to continue to provide innovative and successful programs with quality learning outcomes.

The following are just a few achievements of our RTO (evidence of which will be provided as a confidential submission supporting this submission):

- We played key roles in the 2019-2022 bushfires by helping to upskill fire-fighting trainers for a range of fire and emergency management agencies and associated organisations. We received personal letters of thanks and support from agency officials commenting on our ability to be flexible, and willingness to adopt innovative learning and assessment approaches.
- We work with a range of organisations in the Care sector, in our regional NSW area who are struggling with labour shortages. For each organisation we tailor custom learning programs along with support so that experienced industry professionals can train new staff more effectively. Again, we have a range of personal 'thank you' notes from graduates and employers who have been able to address some of their challenges as a result of the training provided by our private RTO
- We worked with a major university to develop an innovative program for senior officials and policy makers from another country who are also seeking to improve the status and perception of VET in

¹ (Government funding of VET 2020 By NCVER Statistical report 2 December 2021)

² 2022 ITECA State Of The Sector Report: The role of independent skills training and higher education providers in developing Australia's workforce

their country. This program so far has been successful and we are seeing many positive results from student's projects being implemented in their country.

- Over the past decade we have trained well over 50 successful TAFE teachers and head teachers - some of them have won awards or have otherwise been recognised for their excellence.
- We self-funded and ran our own innovative e-learning program to help vocational educators upskill during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was when thousands of educators across the country were struggling with the skills to deliver quality online learning and continue the education of their students. To be clear, we offered this for free or heavily subsidised to over 75 educators by application. We did not utilise any support from government or otherwise. To this day we still get messages of thanks from participants who are doing great things in online learning in VET as a result of their learning with us during this program.

In conclusion, the independent and private RTOs play a crucial role in providing quality skills training and support for students. Private RTOs offer numerous advantages over public providers, such as their ability to adapt rapidly to changing industry needs, their nimbleness and agility, and their close partnerships with local industries resulting in remarkable student outcomes.

The achievements of our own RTO are just a small example of the positive impact that private RTOs can have in addressing local skills needs, providing innovative and successful programs, and ultimately improving the perceptions and status of the VET sector.

I implore the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training to recognise the vital role that private RTOs play in the VET sector and to support their continued growth and success.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a response to this inquiry.

Sincerely,
Paul Pellier